

In the last Office Action, the Examiner objected to Figs. 1A-1C; objected to claim 4 because of informalities; rejected claims 1-23 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph; and rejected claims 3, 16, and 18-22 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph.

Acknowledgement of Foreign Priority

In the last Office Action, the Examiner did not indicate acknowledgement of Applicants' claim for priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119 based on Japanese Application No. P11-67513, filed March 12, 1999. Applicants respectfully request formal acknowledgement of their claim for foreign priority.

Drawing Objections

Applicants propose, in the accompanying Request for Approval of Drawing Change, amending Figs. 1A-1C to include the legend "Prior Art," as suggested by the Examiner. Accordingly, the objection to the drawings should be deemed overcome.

Claim Objection

Regarding the objection to claim 4, this objection is moot in view of its cancellation.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph

Regarding the § 112, first paragraph rejection of claim 1, Applicants amend claim 1. Figs. 2A and 2B show an exemplary embodiment of the semiconductor device recited in claim 1, which is described, for example, at page 5, line 17 to page 6, line 1 in the specification for the present application. Accordingly, the § 112, first paragraph rejection should be withdrawn. It should be noted, however, that the illustrative embodiments described in the specification and shown in the drawings do not limit the literal or equivalent meaning of the terms used in the claims.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph

Regarding the § 112, second paragraph rejection of claim 3, the rejection is moot in view of the cancellation of claim 3. However, in claims 1, 2, and 5, Applicants have clarified recitations regarding the third conductor. Support for the third conductor recitations of claims 1, 2, and 5 is provided, for example, in Figs. 2A and 2B and described at page 5, line 17 to page 6, line 1 in the specification for the present application.

Regarding the § 112, second paragraph rejection of claim 16, Applicants have clarified that the second conductor includes a first portion formed on the first conductor and a second portion formed on the first portion made of a different material for that of the first portion. This recitation is supported, for example, by the embodiment of Figs. 11A, 11B, and 12B, as well as page 9, line 34 to page 10, line 9 and page 10, line 31 to page 11, line 1 of the specification for the present application.

Regarding the § 112, second paragraph rejection of claims 18 and 21, Applicants amend claim 1 so that the second insulating film includes a thin area. This recitation is supported, for example, by the embodiment of Figs. 2A and 2B, as well as page 2, lines 18-22 of the specification for the present application. It should be noted, however, that the illustrative embodiments described in the specification and shown in the drawings do not limit the literal or equivalent meaning of the terms used in the claims.

Accordingly, the § 112, second paragraph rejection of claims 3, 16, 18 and 21 should be withdrawn.

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CONCLUSION

Attached hereto is a marked-up version of the changes made to the claims by this amendment. The attachment is captioned "Appendix to the Amendment of March 6, 2002" Deletions appear as normal text surrounded by [] and additions appear as underlined text.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully request the reconsideration and reexamination of this application and the timely allowance of the pending claims.

Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this response and charge any additional required fees to our deposit account 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

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APPENDIX TO AMENDMENT OF MARCH 6, 2002

Version with Markings to Show Changes Made

Amendments to the Claims

Please amend claims 1, 2, 5, and 16, as follows:

1. (Amended) A semiconductor device comprising:

a first conductor;

a first insulating film formed on said first conductor;

a [columnar] second conductor [having a bottom face that is in contact with a top face of the first conductor] including a first plug and a second plug formed on said first conductor through said first insulating film;

[a first insulating film that covers the first and second conductors;]

a third conductor [placed on the first insulating film and having a first end whose bottom face is in contact with a top face of the second conductor] including a first wire formed on said first insulating film and the first plug and a second wire formed on an extension of the first wire on said first insulating film and the second plug; and

a second insulating film [that covers the third conductor and first insulating film, the second insulating film having a first portion of a first thickness on the second conductor and a second portion of a second thickness on the third conductor wherein the first thickness is thinner than the second thickness] formed on said third conductor and over said first insulating film, said second insulating film including a thin area over said second conductor for guiding a laser beam.

2. (Amended) The semiconductor device of claim 1, wherein:
[a plurality of the third conductors are arranged in parallel with one another such
that the first ends thereof are on a straight line]
said second conductor includes a third plug and a fourth plug formed on said first
conductor through said first insulating film; and
said third conductor includes a third wire formed parallel with the first wire on said
first insulating film and the third plug and a fourth wire formed on an extension of the
third wire on said first insulating film and the fourth plug.

5. (Amended) The semiconductor device of claim [1] 2, wherein:
[a plurality of the second conductors are arranged along a straight line]
said second conductor includes a fifth plug formed on a first straight line
connecting the first plug and the third plug on said first conductor through said first
insulating film and a sixth plug formed on a second straight line connecting the second
plug and the fourth plug on said first conductor through said first insulating film.

16. (Amended) The semiconductor device of claim 1, wherein:
the second conductor [is vertically divided into regions having different main
components] includes a first portion formed on said first conductor and a second portion
formed on the first portion made of a different material from that of the first portion.